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detail and the skill with which this is related to the dominating features of the period: the heroic vogue, the system of Hobbes, and the development of the critical roll-call. This and the following chapter, "Contemporary Philosophy," are equally illuminating, and supplement each other. It is to be regretted that Mr. Spingarn did not carry his work beyond the Restoration, giving it approximately the scope of his three volumes of *Critical Essays*. The last two chapters are particularly valuable for the mass of material they bring before the general student. This assembling of out-of-the-way documents seems to be Professor Routh's specific mission throughout the series, and he does it with zest and apparent facility. This time the wide variety of his resources is almost too much for the limitations of one chapter-heading, "The Advent of Modern Thought in Popular Literature" being perhaps as adequate as one could expect.

The bibliographies in this volume are rather above the average of the series. There is no elaborate attempt at classification, there are various omissions, and there is not always perfect integration with the material of the chapters. For anyone but the specialist, however, they should be entirely sufficient.

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THE POLITICAL PROPHECY IN ENGLAND, by Rupert Taylor, Ph.D., New York, The Columbia University Press. Pp. xx, 165.

In this book Dr. Taylor has performed a valuable service by furnishing a general survey of a field of English literature which has hitherto received scanty attention. Working with a literature of considerable extent, much of it inaccessible, and with nothing to serve as guide, he has studied and classified the available material with great thoroughness, and the book is certain to be of value to future students of the subject as well as to students of mediæval literature generally. As the work is professedly a guide book, it is to be regretted that two omissions seriously affect the convenience with which it can be used. In the first place, a chronological list of the prophecies treated is greatly needed. Such a list would not only have been useful for reference, but it would also have enabled the reader to grasp more readily the historical development of the type of literature which is being studied. In the second place, there is no index—an omission more serious than the first. This omission is the more irritating because the book would really be of considerable value for

reference if the index had been included. The long "Synopsis" which precedes the study, though not without value perhaps, would be missed much less than the list or the index.

English political prophecy, Dr. Taylor shows, had its origin in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *The Book of Merlin* (1120-1135). The type of prophecy found in this work is called Galfridian, and English political prophecy is usually of the same kind. Before the thirteenth century it is apparently the only type in England. In this method individual men and women are given the names of animals. Strange to say, this type of prophecy apparently was scarcely known on the continent before the thirteenth century, the Sibyllic type (in which the initials of the names of persons are used) prevailing. Dr. Taylor regards the later popularity of the Galfridian type on the continent as due to the influence of Geoffrey, and he devotes a valuable chapter to a study of "The Galfridian Prophecy in Other Countries than England."

Inasmuch as *The Book of Merlin* is the starting point for this literary type, the problem of the origin of the book is interesting as throwing light on the genesis of the type. Chapter Two is devoted to a study of the source of the *Merlin*. It produces very little new evidence, but the old is handled with judgment. Geoffrey translated the book from the Welsh, in which language it was probably a collection of fragments. He did not imitate earlier Continental prophecies. Dr. Taylor is probably inclined to depreciate too much possible influences other than Welsh. He is no doubt right in regarding the *Book* as by no means a mere forgery, but he seems too certain that the Galfridian type was really brought in by Geoffrey. His own references show that the use of animal names to represent persons was at least known before Geoffrey. Even the biblical symbolism, in the *Book of Daniel* for instance, is not so foreign to Geoffrey's *Book of Merlin* as it would seem to be by the accounts of Dr. Taylor. However, our author is no doubt right in emphasizing the work of Geoffrey, for the numerous imitations, translations, and references prove the great influence of *The Book of Merlin*.

The fourth chapter, which contains a discussion of the relation of prophecies to political events, is also of great interest. The author shows the general credence given to secular prophecies by all classes of people, and states, what is no doubt true, that prophecies must have been circulated orally in England. The fact that the portions of the prophecies referring to events past had been fulfilled was regarded as sufficient ground for trusting the as yet unfulfilled prophecies. Moreover, if prophecies were not fulfilled in the expected manner, new interpretations to restore their authority were forth-

coming. Consequently, prophecies retained their credit, and played a real part in history. In times of crisis prophecies appeared in great numbers. They were often written to influence public opinion, and many which were probably written as literary exercises were so used. Dr. Taylor points out examples, of which *Adam Davy's Five Dreams about Edward the Second* is one of the most important. History must have been more or less influenced by such prophecies. Taylor's account of the evolution of prophecies from literary to propagandist is, however, to be questioned. He writes: "The prophecies were written at first purely as literary exercises. After they had been in existence some time they were quoted as bearing upon certain political issues. But in the course of time when factions grew up in the government and political rivalry became more intense, prophecies were written and circulated deliberately as active political propaganda." The list of prophecies before the fourteenth century, when all types of prophecy are abundant in England, is entirely too short to allow this account of the development to be more than conjecture. The Welsh prophecies out of which, according to Taylor, the type grew were undoubtedly propagandist in a very large measure; that is, they were used to keep up the national spirit of the defeated Celts. Geoffrey's translation, if his work can be called translation, may have been made for literary purposes, but the prophecies corresponded to political events which had just occurred and readers necessarily applied the unfulfilled prophecies to events which were to happen. This is shown, for instance, in the *History* of Ordericus Vitalis, who was Geoffrey's contemporary. Moreover, when John de Courcy was engaged in the conquest of Ireland for Henry II, some forty years after Geoffrey's prophecies appeared, he carried about with him a copy of the so-called "prophecies of Columba" and applied them to his own acts (Giraldus Cambrensis, *Expugnatio Hibernica*, Liber II, cap. xvii; see Rolls Series, vol. 21⁵, p. 342). O'Curry thought these prophecies were fabricated by the English for political purposes. He remarks: "Well did the astute Anglo-Normans (as well as, indeed, their Elizabethan successors in a subsequent age), know what use to make of these rude and baseless predictions" (*Lectures on the Materials of Ancient Irish History*, p. 431). This example makes it clear that the political prophecies had influence on events, and were perhaps fabricated with political intent, almost from the beginning.

For the general reader Chapter Five, "The Development and Decline of the Political Prophecy," is probably most interesting. It contains an excellent historical survey of the type. The development is apparently from Welsh through

Latin and French to English. The character of the symbols also changed. At first apparently arbitrary, they became traditional and conventional, and at a later time were often heraldic. The popularity of the political prophecy continued for several centuries, and declined only in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, partially discredited by the growing rationalism represented by the attacks of such men as Bacon, and partially replaced by astrology. The prophecies are of considerable literary interest in the age of Elizabeth, as they are parodied by Shakespeare (in *King Lear*) and have influenced the animal symbolism used by Greene (in his *James the Fourth*), by James Howell, and by others.

Attention may be called to a few misprints which might mislead the hurried reader. On p. xv, under "The Erceldoune Cycle", is the note: "Later than 1188." This should read: "Later than 1388." On p. 52 several dates are given as of the twelfth century, all of which should be of the fourteenth century. On p. 56, two lines from the bottom of the page, the date 1358 apparently should be 1356. The reference to chapter 57 of the *History* of Ordericus Vitalis in the footnote on p. 14 should be to chapter 47.

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HALL, HENRY MARION: IDYLLS OF FISHERMEN.

A History of the Literary Species. (Columbia Univ. Studies in Comparative Literature, No. 13) 1912.

Though an offshoot from the pastoral eclogue, the literary piscatory, studied in this work, has an interest all its own. To the student of the pastoral in its manifold forms this minor species furnishes an instructive parallel—a fact which Dr. Hall recognizes in stressing the more general 'realism' of the fisher-idyll. While the form took over many of the conventions of the type it imitates, the Arcadian shepherd is replaced by a fisherman facing the stern actualities of his lot. It is because of this restriction that the piscatory—with the one exception of Sannazaro's—never offered to the poet the wide range of themes and the larger framework which the pastoral easily attained.

The purpose and plan of the book are stated on pages 3 following: "Theocritus is the creator of the literary piscatory, as he is of the literary bucolic, and the main object of this essay is to trace the development of the class of poems, with related pieces of prose, which are in a general way descended from his fisher idyll". The aim is again summed up at the end (page 199): "The present work aims to treat the idyll